

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAIGON 06350 141301 Z

53

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03 PRS-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 DPW-01 IO-12 RSR-01

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P 141130 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0176

DAO SAIGON PRIORITY

S E C R E T SAIGON 6350

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: MOPS, CB, VS

SUBJECT: AMPHIBIOUS ASSULT TO SUPPORT MEKONG CONVOY

FOL TEL SENT ACTION IMMEDIATE SAIGON INFO PRIORITY PHNOM PENH
FROM CANTHO DATED APRIL 14, 1973, RPTD TO YOU FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE S E C R E T CAN THO 0188

1. RVNAF IS PLANNING TO LAND AT LEAST A BATTALION- SIZE
FORCE ALONG THE MEKONG NEAR THE HONG NGU/ CAMBODIAN BORDER
TOMORROW, APRIL 15, IN AN EFFORT TO DISLODGE A VC/ NVA FORCE
WHICH HAS BEEN HOLDING UP NINE SHIPS OF THE MEKONG CONVOY FOR
A WEEK. THIS AMPHIBIOUS FORCE IS EXPECTED TO LINK UP WITH
TWO BATTALIONS AND AN ARMORED GROUP OF THE 9 TH DIVISION
WHICH HAVE BEEN DRIVING NORTH ALONG THE RIVER BANK
AGAINST STIFF RESISTANCE FROM THE NVA 272 ND REGIMENT AMH
ELEMENTS OF THE 75 TH ARTILLERY REGIMENT.

2. COMMODORE DINH MANH HUNG, DEPUTY TO THE CNO FOR RIVER
NE
OPERATIONS, ASSURED A CONGEN OFFICER APRIL 14, THAT RVNAF
HAS BEEN DOING EVERYTHING IT CAN TO ENSURE THE SAFE TRANSPORT OF
ESSENTIAL GOODS TO PHNOM PENH. HOWEVAN, THE 9 TH DIVISION
HAS ENCOUNTERED STIFF RESISTANCE FROM OPPOSING INFANTRY AND
ARTILLERY FORCES ALONG THE HONG NGU BANK OF THE MEKONG. HUNG
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 06350 141301 Z

INDICATED THAT IN THE PAST TWO- THREE DAYS 9 TH DIVISION
FORCES HAVE SUFFERED MORE
THAN ONE HUFKRED KILLED OR WOUNDED
IN OLE CLEARING OPERATION.

3. RVNAF OFFICERS ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT A SHALLOW
STRETCH OF THE MEKONG APPROXIMATELY EIGHT KILOMETERS FROM THE
CAMBODIAN BORDER. THE MERCHANT SHIPS MUST NAVIGATE WITHIN ONE
HUNDRED METERS OF THE RIVER BANK, MAKING THEM HIGHLY VULNERABLE
TO VC/ NVA FIRE.

4. HUNG REPORTED THAT THE NAVY HAS ASSEMBLED FOUR RIVERINE
DIVUDIONS COMPRISING SEVENTY BOATS IN THE TAN CHAU AREA.
IN ADDITION THE NAVY RECENTLY DEPLOYED EIGHT LCM' S FOR
POSSIBLE TRANSPORT OF ARMORED VEHICLES. THE NAVAL FORCE WILL
SUPPORT THE LANDINGS AND THE 9 TH DIVISION DRIVE AND WILL THEN
PROVIDE CONVOY SECURITY UP TO THE CAMBODIUF BORDER.

5. WE UNDERSTAND FROM OUR VICE CONSUL IN CHAU DOC, TWO MARINE
BATTALIONS HAVE JUST ARRIVED IN HONG NGU. PRESUMABLY THEY
WILL COMPRISE THE AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT FORCE DESCRIBED BY
COMMODORE HUNG.

6. COMMODORE HUNG CLAIMS THAT THE NVA 207 TH REGIMENT PREVIOUSLY
REPORTED OPERATING ALONG THE RIVERBANK HAD IN FACT ONLY COMMITTED
ONE BATTALION. THE BATTALION HUNG BELIEVES WAS WITHDRAWN
EARLIER THIS WEEK.
BARNES UNQUOTE
BUNKER

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